

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS WITH REGARD TO  
PROFESSOR STERLING'S "ABSTRACT AND SUMMARY"

In overall effect, the Abstract and Summary is helpful when used by a lay reader prior to undertaking a study of the "Evaluation and Critique" itself. However, some of the good points made by Professor Sterling are limited in their effect because of difficulty encountered in following some of the more technical language used by the author. For the most part, however, the Summary is understandable and of potential benefit.

Page 1. Professor Sterling indicates that National Center For Health Statistics published "Cigarette Smoking and Health Characteristics". The publication was actually accomplished by the Public Health Service of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Pages 1 and 2. The titles to the two subheadings should be underlined to give uniformity to the remainder of the report.

Page 2. The first sentence of the first paragraph under the heading "Problems of Survey by Household Interviews" does not make sense in its present form. There seems to be a word or phrase that has been left out.

Page 2. In the first sentence in the second paragraph under "Problems of Survey by Household Interviews", Professor Sterling uses the expression "inexpensive part-time interviewers". Query whether the use of the word "inexpensive" is proper and has some basis in fact. It would not seem to be appropriate even if true.

Page 4. The report previously listed "three large sources of systematic error: due to memory, due to motivation, and due to selection." On page 4, proxy responses are discussed as a possible source of biasness, although not previously listed. This may be proper, however, in view of the fact that the author was using other biasing factors in combination when discussing the possible biasness in the proxy responses.

Page 4. The author does not mention the use of "teenagers" as a source of information in the proxy responses as a possible source of error or bias.

Page 4. The heading should be underlined.

Page 5. The first sentence on page 5 has a rather awkward beginning.

Page 5. The word "corporation" contained in the second line of the first sentence under "Errors in Matching Diagnosis" should be "cooperation".

Page 6. In the second full paragraph on the page, the sentence begins "The existence of factors were investigated which could be unrelated to the accuracy of reporting and yet may have been responsible for the large discrepancies." This sentence is rather awkward.

Page 7. The last sentence in the first paragraph is not clear unless the other errors are also given a percentage figure. The benefit of this sentence is questioned.

Page 8. The last sentence of the first paragraph would raise a question as to what percentages were assigned for the "somewhat threatening" and "not threatening" categories as to the percentages of underreports.

Page 9. The heading on page 9 should be underlined.

Page 11. The first paragraph contains a very good point, but, as presently expressed, it is most difficult to comprehend.

Page 12. The caption should be underlined.

Page 12. It would be helpful if a little more information in regard to age adjustment problem could be given to make the sentence beginning in the third line on page 12 more understandable.

Page 13. The caption should be underlined.

Page 14. The caption should be underlined.

Page 14. No mention is made of the nonresponse treatment, that is, that the households which did not respond were counted as though they were the same as those households which were interviewed.